



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.3447 | FAX (517) 373.5849
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/birkholz/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
03-31

Contact: Amanda Price
(517) 373-1855

Beach Maintenance Bill Passes Senate

Senator Birkholz announces full agreement on House Bill 4257

Thursday, May 29, 2003-Senator Patricia Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township, today announced that the hard work and the commitment of key legislators and members of Save Our Shoreline came together to provide for responsible beach maintenance with the unanimous passage of HB 4257.

"I am very pleased that all the parties who have been involved in resolving the issue of the kind of responsible activities that can take place on the beaches of our Great Lakes have reached this agreement" said Senator Birkholz.

One of the points of contention in the bill was trying to arrive at the definition of a beach. After hours of discussion and negotiation, Senator Birkholz acknowledged the key point in the legislation with her statement that: "The bottom line is, a beach is a beach, is a beach and people should be able to care for them properly so long as they care for the environment,"

HB 4257 provides for the immediate allowance of certain beach maintenance activities such as mowing, raking and leveling of sand on Great Lakes shorelines and will provide for removal of vegetation without having to obtain a permit in two designated pilot areas also along Great Lakes shorelines of the state. The DEQ still retains important oversight over these practices to ensure key environmental areas will be adequately protected.

-More-

“One of the primary recommendations of the Great Lakes Conservation Task Force headed by now Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema was to allow for reasonable shoreline maintenance by responsible property owners,” Birkholz said. “In these times of tight budgets, it is important that we support our citizen stewards in the good work they do to care for not just their property for the natural resources of the state. They are truly partners in our work to conserve the environment.”

“We also recognized the need to help our tourism partners, hotel and motel owners, to have clear, open sand and pleasant access to their beaches,” Birkholz added. “If ever there was a time to encourage tourism business it is now.”

HB 4257 now moves back to the House for a concurrence vote.

Editor’s Note: Audio comments from Senator Birkholz can be heard at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire